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Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 HA-02 PM-03 INR-05 SP-02
CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PA-01 IO-03 /037 W
----------019139 050903Z /20
R 050817Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7170
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18973

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP FR LA
SUBJECT: FRENCH COMMENTS ON LAO-FRENCH TIES

REF: A) VIENTIANE 0699 B) VIENTIANE 0729

1. FRENCH CHARGE INFORMED US JULY 4 THAT FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO LAOS, ROGER DUZER, DURING PASSAGE THROUGH BANGKOK JULY 3, HAD COMMENTED TO HIM THAT FRENCH-LAO RELATIONS HAD BEEN BAD FOR SOME TIME BUT WERE NO WORSE THAN THEY HAD BEEN THREE, SIX OR TWELVE MONTHS AGO. AMBASSADOR DUZER TOLD THE FRENCH CHARGE THAT THE DENOUEMENT IN LAO-FRENCH RELATIONS, THE EXPULSION OF MOST FRENCH DIPLOMATS, HAD RESULTED FROM SEEMINGLY INELUCTABLE ESCALATION OF ADVERSE ACTIONS TAKEN BY VIENTIANE AND PARIS.

2. FRENCH CHARGE EARLIER HAD EXPRESSED TO US HIS VIEW THAT VIENTIANE GENUINELY BELIEVED THE GOF WAS ENGAGED IN SUPPORTING ANTI-LDPR ELEMENTS. CHOICE FOR INITIAL EXPULSION OF CONSELOR LAMBERT AND CULTURAL COUNSELOR GOUSTIN STEMMED, IN CHARGE'S VIEW, FROM LAMBERT'S WELL KNOWN RIGHTIST AND ANTI-COMMUNIST
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VIEWS. ALSO ECHOING REF A, CHARGE ASSUMED THAT CULTURAL COUNSELOR GOUSTIN'S LINKS WITH THE CULTURAL CENTER AND THE DISAFFECTED WHO BECOME REFUGEES PROBABLY LED TO CHOICE OF HIM AS SECOND DIPLOMAT TO BE EXPELLED.

3. COMMENT: WHILE, AS VIENTIANE COMMENTED IN REFTELS, LDPR PARANOIA AND PETULANCE SEEM BASIC EXPLANATIONS FOR THE LAO

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ACTION, WE ALSO SEE THE DETERIORATION OF FRENCH-LAO
RELATIONS AS PART OF THE PATTERN OF ISOLATION, EXCEPT FROM
THE BLOC NATIONS AND VIETNAM ITSELF, WHICH HANOI SEEMS TO
PREFER FOR ITS CLIENTS IN VIENTIANE. WHILE PERMITTING
THEMSELVES A WIDER LATITUDE OF CONTACTS, THE VIETNAMESE MAY
INTEND TO TRY TO SQUEEZE OUT COMPETITION FOR INFLUENCE IN
VIENTIANE, ESPECIALLY FROM PEKING, PARIS, AND THE WEST
GENERALLY. WE SUSPECT THAT HANOI ALSO PLAYED A ROLE IN
THE LAO FRENCH TROUBLES.
O'DONOHUE

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